

The Issue of Offspring

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Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Friendship, Humor

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, Toothless

Status: Completed

Published: 2012-07-06 01:53:18

Updated: 2012-07-06 01:53:18

Packaged: 2016-04-26 13:36:04

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,923

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: It was a problem Hiccup had thought about a lot, but the answer was more than simple. It was amazing.

The Issue of Offspring

****AN:**** My first HtTYD fanfic! Not too long ago, I finally saw 'Gift of the Night Fury' for the first time, and while I did like it, I hated the fact that there were no baby Night Furies. They would have been soooooo cute! But then, I started thinking about the movie 'Reign of Fire,' and this popped into my head and would not leave. I hope you all like it! :)

****Disclaimer:**** I do not own How to Train Your Dragon. Dreamworks does.

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><p>For a long while, as the winter snows slowly melted into what would become the short Berk spring, Hiccup had nothing more to do than worry about Toothless.<p>

In the forge, with no new houses to build since the Dragon Wars had ended and no weapons to sharpen for the same reason, Hiccup and Gobber were left with less than a full day's work each week, their nimble hands and hook only needed for belt buckles that had become too small and the occasional eating knife that had gotten chipped from overuse. Because of this, Hiccup had been left with more time on his hands than anyone felt comfortable with him having, though with the village no longer under constant threat of attack and his status of a hero, the people of Berk warily allowed him his time to think.

And, for the most part, that time had been put to good use.

Working off the designs that he had used for Toothless and the

measurements that he had managed to take from each of the dragons now living with the Vikings, Hiccup had set about creating custom saddles for each species, taking into account their various personality types and quirks for each design. For the Gronkles, it had been a simple tweak to the design already being used to take advantage of the dragon's full motion of wing range, widening and rearranging the straps that had crossed around the creature's legs so as to avoid impeding its ability to fly. For the Zippleback, it had been harder to find a design that would be just right, for while the dual neck saddles he had rigged for the Thorston twins worked perfectly well for them, most of the Zipplebacks living within the village only had one rider, making it harder for said rider to control the dragon during flight. It hadn't been until Hiccup had come up with a steering system and saddle combination that would allow the rider to sit in between the two necks and control the dragon with two sets of long pieces of leather that tied just behind their heads could the problem posed by the two-brained dragon could be considered solved.

From there, advancements had just sky-rocketed, with each new problem being solved in just a few days of it arriving. For the Monstrous Nightmare, all he had had to do was apply a flame-proof coating to the various pieces of tack for many people to claim that he was a genius as well as a hero, and convincing the riders of the Deadly Nadder that adding a shiny bauble or two to their vain stead's saddle-for the sole purpose of making it more appealing to the dragon, and thus making them more likely to wear it- had been easier than he had expected, leading to an entire squadron of Dragon Riders that sparkled in the sun. Of all the dragons he dealt with regularly, these, Hiccup had to admit, were amongst the most amusing.

However, soon enough, as winter continued to drag along, the need to Hiccup's unique brand of improvements slowly fell to the side as riders and dragons alike settled upon routines and styles that they could agree on. Although he spent much of the extra time coming up with more and more ideas on how to improve the village, from more efficient ways to haul and store fish to a system that might make freshwater that much more available away from the river, eventually, with no way to build his designs during winter, his idle hands and wandering mind soon fell upon a thought that had recently been bothering him greatly.

Was Toothless doomed to be the only Night Fury of his kind, mateless and childless until the day he died?

For as long as the Vikings had lived on Berk, no one before him had ever seen a Night Fury. Of course, that didn't mean that there weren't other Night Furies, only that they hadn't been seen by human eyes. For all they knew, for the past seven generations, it could have been a different Night Fury that had accompanied each of the dragon raids that had ever happened. For all they knew, Night Furies could have been more common than Terrible Terrors, but due to their speed and coloring, none had been sighted.

At least, that had been the possibility before he had met and befriended Toothless.

Since then, and especially since the destruction of the Green Death, Hiccup had kept a close eye on the skies, closely examining every wave of dragons that came to their island, searching, eventually in

vain, for that familiar black coloring that would announce the arrival of another of Toothless' species. Soon enough, however, as time passed and nothing appeared to give him hope that his search was not, in fact, hopeless, Hiccup had taken it upon himself to go straight to the source and find out once and for all the answer to his questions.

"Toothless, have you ever even seen another Night Fury?" From there, after a long afternoon of charades and guessing at the meaning of the black dragon's many grumbles and growls, the answer had come out to be 'no.'

Although it hadn't seemed to bother Toothless, Hiccup couldn't help but feel as if something had gone wrong in the natural order of dragons, for what could have happened that his friend, his closest confidant, was to be left alone, the last of his kind amongst thousands of others that were so like him, yet so different at the same time? Just before he had hatched, had the other Night Furies tried to stand up to the Death, leading to their eventual destruction by becoming a multi-course meal for the larger queen? Had a disease swept across the island, killing them off and leaving only him, the last remaining member of a once proud race? What, exactly, had happened to make it so Toothless was destined to be so alone?

Whatever had happened, whenever he had tried to ask Toothless in the past, all the dragon would do is smile and shake his head.

With Toothless remaining silent, Hiccup had decided to go to the only other person who knew as much about dragons as he did to ask for help: Fishlegs.

At first, the larger boy had been surprised to find the supposed 'Dragon Expert' needing his help, for while the two of them had become close enough over the last year to hang out in a group setting and find each other's company pleasing, never before had they sought each other out to just hang by themselves. They had accepted that they could be friends, that they shared a great deal of interest in many of the same subjects, dragons the main amongst them, but years of disapproval and rejection were hard to overcome.

As things were, however, by the time Hiccup had brought up his issue about Toothless with Fishlegs, things had fallen so that luck was on his side, for ever since shortly after Snoggletog, the other boy had been wondering almost the exact same thing. Only, for Fishlegs, the line of thought was going in one very different direction.

"I've been thinking, ever since it turned out that Meatlug is a girl, just what is the gender ratio amongst dragons?"

Although a strange thought, the more Hiccup thought about it, the more it began to make sense to him. From what he had seen on the breeding island, every single dragon that had been there had had at least one egg, one offspring to care for, at least one that they had claimed as their own and refused to let out their sight for more than two, maybe three hours at the most. Even after the dragons had returned to Berk, Toothless had proved to be the only one without a hatchling to care for, the only one without a family.

Or was he?

Although it had taken months of attempts, hours upon hours of working with Fishlegs to check every single dragon, rider and riderless, that now inhabited Berk, finally, finally, the two of them had come to one very startling conclusion.

It wasn't long before Hiccup found Toothless, the black dragon lazily laying in a sunny patch in his clearing, which had been opened up so that he could come and go as he pleased. Opening a single eye as Hiccup approached him, it was with a gummy smile that he flicked his ear in welcome, inviting his human to come join him by the lake. Finally understanding the smug, self satisfied look that had been Toothless' prevalent attitude since the hatchings, Hiccup carefully slid off his metal foot before joining the dragon on the banks, his foot and stump swirling in the water as he stared at his friend. After a long moment of companionable silence, Hiccup finally spoke up, determined once and for all to gain the answers he wanted.

"You are male, right Toothless?"

Giving him a look that spoke of one that had been suffering for a long, long time, Toothless nodded in agreement before rolling his eyes and letting out a slight, indignant huff.

"And let me guess," Hiccup continued, his eyes now on the sky as he prepared to voice his and Fishlegs' theory. "There are no female Night Furies, are there? Only male ones, right?"

>Once again, Toothless nodded, though this time his eyes were sparkling with amusement at the fact that his human had finally begun to figure it all out on his own.<p>

"Every so many years, only one Night Fury is born, am I correct?"

For the third time, another nod.

"And all the other dragons, from the Nadders to the Nightmares to the Zipplebacks to even the Terrors, they're all only females, aren't they?"

A fourth nod, though this time it was accompanied by a snort of fond laughter.

"So all those eggs..." Here Hiccup's voice faltered as he thought about what, exactly, he was about to imply. Glancing at Toothless, it was with a growing grin that Hiccup punched Toothless on the side, his smile turning sly with each word. "All those eggs, all those hatchlings, they're yours, aren't they?"

It was with a final nod, a smug look, and a self-indulgent blast of fire that caused the lake to boil that the last of Hiccup's questions were answered. Laughing as Toothless rolled into the now steaming lake, sending a splash of almost uncomfortably warm water washing over him, it was with a shake of his head that Hiccup could only say one more sentence before he was once again doused.

"You, my friend, are one sly dragon."

All of his worrying had been for naught, for Toothless had hundreds of females and thousands of children to keep him company until the

end.

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file.